DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 223 479 SO 014 301

AUTHOR Bennion, Roy B.; Nichols, Elizabeth L.

TITLE Things Are Happening: A Survey Report of North American Family History Activity. Series 340.

INSTITUTION Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the World Conference on Records, "Preserving Our Heritage" (Salt Lake City, UT, August 12-15, 1980).
AVAILABLE FROM The Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150 ($1.00 per single copy).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Activities; Adult Education; Community Programs; Cultural Background; Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnic Origins; *Family Characteristics; Higher Education; Local History; North American History; Oral History; Program Descriptions; Public Libraries; Social Science Research; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Family History; *Genealogy

ABSTRACT

To find out about grass roots activities and projects in family history, a survey form was distributed through periodicals and newsletters of genealogical and historical organizations and through general periodicals; telephone calls were made to all state boards of education; and data were gathered from projects already in the researchers' computer data base. In all, 131 responses from 37 states, the District of Columbia, and 3 Canadian provinces were received. Results describe types of activities and projects (50% are courses in family history), funding and sponsorship (varies greatly), content, and area of emphasis (pedigree chart, followed by family groups records and family tradition); test and resource materials (most instructors prepare their own text); participants (from one person to over 7000 in one project); instructors (from no degree to Ph.D.); and greatest problems (time, logistics, resources) and rewards (personal growth, family communication, teacher satisfaction, research benefits). Twelve activities were selected and are discussed in detail. These include a Foxfire project; a high school project, "Preserving Ethnic Traditions"; a junior high school "Family History Night"; a history fair; a public library sponsored "kin and community classes"; a summer workshop for adults; and a community oral history program. (RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED223479

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth L. Nichols

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

WORLD
CONFERENCE
ON RECORDS

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

August 12-15, 1980

Things Are Happening: A Survey Report of North American Family History Activity

Roy B. Bennion,
Elizabeth L. Nichols

Series 340

SP 014 301

The statements or
opinions expressed by
speakers at the conference
either verbally or
in written form
are those of the speakers
and do not
necessarily represent
the official position
of the sponsors of
the conference.

Copyright © 1980
All Rights Reserved

Published in the
United States of America
Corporation of the President of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

THINGS ARE HAPPENING:
A SURVEY REPORT OF NORTH AMERICAN FAMILY HISTORY ACTIVITY

Roy Bennion, Elizabeth Nichols

Roy B. Bennion. Born in Utah. Resides in Spanish Fork, Utah. Senior systems analyst, Genealogical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ph.D. (instructional psychology), Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Elizabeth L. Nichols. Born in Virginia. Resides in Salt Lake City, Utah. Special Assistant, General Program Committee and United States and Canada Sub-Committee, World Conference on Records, Genealogical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Author, editor, teacher, genealogist.

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of Roots, both as a book and a television series, the upsurge of family-related research in libraries across the country, and the increase in the publication of "how-to" books and articles as well as family histories, make it easy to feel the pulse of a society interested in family history. But to know in detail what is happening in this field requires a more careful approach.

With the theme "preserving our heritage" for the WORLD CONFERENCE ON RECORDS, we felt that a study of what is happening in the field of family history would be useful to those attending the conference as well as to the sponsoring organization. By becoming aware of the activity and resources in this field, one can evaluate and improve his own programs or establish new ones in his own area of the country.

In considering the best approach, we first found it necessary to review studies already made. A major survey was conducted in 1979 by V. Ben Bloxham of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Information from this survey will be discussed, along with other related materials, in World Conference seminar no. 133, titled "Family History Education."

Surveys were made of genealogical and family history activities in libraries across the United States in 1973 and in 1977.[1] The results of these surveys have never been published. They show that the increased activity experienced by the Genealogical Society of Utah Library in Salt Lake City is typical of that experienced by libraries across the country. This library increased over 250% in genealogical activity between 1971 and 1978 (from 700 patrons per day in 1971 to 3,600 on peak days, with an average of 2,500 patrons per day in 1977.) One peak day showed 4,200 patrons.

More than 4,000 letters are answered per month. From February to May 1977 the library Public Relations Section was contacted by over 45 different news media—national, local, and international representing television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and wire services. Activity and interest still continue to increase.

The National Genealogical Society in Washington, D.C. reported in 1977: "response to one national magazine mention of our name has generated over 3,000 pieces of mail in less than three weeks in April 1977."[3] Also, following television coverage on the Tonight show in February 1977, the Institute of Family Research in Salt Lake City, received over 21,000 letters in three months, from

people wanting to know about their genealogies and family histories.[4]

With these facts to consider, it was decided not to duplicate the other surveys, but rather to supplement them. The grass roots level of activity—under no formal organization--had not been surveyed. It became our goal to tap this source as was feasible.

A survey of activities at the grass roots level is a rather difficult strata to reach. In addition, we faced the question: What is family history? Who is interested in it? To whom should the study be directed? We found that we could approach the study as a genealogist, as a historian, as a demographer, as an anthropologist, or as one of several other disciplines, or just as a hobby. The results would be much like the description of the blind men's first experience with an elephant.

Rather than use any particular stance in our study, we decided to distribute a general survey form through various publications so that anyone could respond from whatever point of view they wished. Information on projects that came to our attention was also added to our data base. Our job then was to analyze this data and present the results in a way that would aid those wanting to know more. We decided to emphasize what is happening—that is, projects and activities—rather than institutions or teaching techniques. The questionnaire, included in appendix A, covers generally (1) description of the project or activity, (2) reference material used, (3) subject material covered, (4) scope and participation, (5) funding and sponsorship, (6) personal responses.

We invited several genealogical and historical organizations to publish our survey form. At the time of this writing, the following have responded: (a) The Genealogical Helper (Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers), a bi-monthly periodical with circulation of over 30,000 including many libraries which provide multiple readership; (b) The Federation of Genealogical Societies newsletter (West Hartford, Conn.) with a circulation of over 300 societies; (c) The Utah Genealogical Association newsletter (Salt Lake City, Utah), with a circulation of 1,000, including many libraries. The questionnaires received comprise 41 percent of the survey responses through these channels in this study.

The other sources of information were: (1) periodicals [10 percent]; (2) telephone calls to each of the State Boards of Education [21 percent]; (3) data sent to us by project administrators, etc. [18 percent]; and (4) other references with minimum details [10 percent].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the activities in family history, we found it necessary to study the various "aliases" under which family history may be disguised. For example, a genealogist approaches the study of family history quite differently from perhaps a historian, a demographer or an anthropologist. The pedigree charts and family group records developed through genealogical research only tell who the actors are. Family history research tells what the actors did and how they felt. "What were their joys, fears, achievements, disappointments, and goals? What was their philosophy of life? What types of things made them happy or sad, afraid or courageous? How were these feelings expressed in their actions, attitudes, and lives?"

For the historian, family history is an extension of the study of events of the world, the nation, and communities as they affect the affairs of the family. He studies family life and interprets it in relation to the surrounding environment. The local history program in the community colleges of North Carolina states as a major purpose of the program..." to stimulate a greater interest in local history at the grass roots level and...to provide those

individuals who wish to become personally involved the knowledge, skills, and incentive to do research on local themes such as...families and individuals...."[6] As one historian stated, "Once neglected almost entirely by historians, the family is now a major focus of their research."[7]

The demographer studies people as a group and compiles statistics of how many died in infancy, or at what age people married, or how many died of disease, etc. "...Historical demography also offers much to the ordinary citizen who is writing a family history. By establishing what the most common experience of families living in a particular period and place was, the demographer provides an invaluable context against which the experience of one family may be compared and our understanding thereby enhanced.... To understand the significance of crucial family events to past families, it is helpful to have some indication of the normal experience of other families in the same time and place."[8]

"Culture consists of more than colorful customs, special food, and unique clothing.... Anthropologists, who originated the concept of culture in general use today, suggest that what makes any culture consists of a pattern of ideas and feelings which is so subtle and penetrates so deeply into most of those who share it that customs, foods, and artifacts are only to be considered ways to express the culture; they are not the culture itself. Family histories fail to be what they might be for many reasons, but one of the most widespread...failings is lack of understanding of how cultural differences affect our creation and reading of history."[9]

Anthropology can assist the family historian in understanding how the thoughts and values of the times in which our ancestors lived are different from our own.

This is only the beginning of the "aliases" under which family history may be found. Others include folklife, folklore, archaeology, social history, historic preservation, oral history, humanities, artifacts, social studies, genetics, and far from least—avocations, along with many, many others. All of these offer rich resources for the family historian.[10]

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

By the time we terminated data-gathering for this report, we had received 131 responses from 37 states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces. The largest number of responses came from Utah (11 percent). Proximity may be one reason for the heavy response from Utah, but the traditional interest in families cannot be discounted. The second largest response came from California (7 percent) and the third largest response came from the District of Columbia and the State of Wisconsin (6 percent each). The area reporting greatest activity is the Midwest. The area reporting the least activity is Canada—probably because we tapped very few sources at the grass roots level there.

The survey was limited to North America, although we are aware of similar activity in other countries. Consult the various lectures in this conference for further details.

TYPES OF ACTIVITES AND PROJECTS

Fifty percent of the 131 responses (65) described classes or courses in family history. Others included workshops, cemetery restoration, compiling guides to cemeteries, history fairs (that include family history), history days for schools, production of filmstrips and slides on family life of various ethnic groups in America, papers, exhibits, performances by students, genealogy clubs, computer sharing of genealogical information, historic preservation, publishing, biography, etc.

FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

We found that the subjects of funding and sponsorship need to be considered together. Some activites are funded by the sponsoring institution or group while others are funded by external sources. Since these two areas are of great interest to anyone seeking to initiate new projects or activities, we present the following:

1. Affiliation with Academic Programs

Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they were affiliated with an educational institution. Of these responses, 59 percent were affiliated with elementary through high school; and 41 percent were affiliated with a college or university (mostly community colleges or continuing education programs).

Some responses which indicated connection with an educational institution did not specify which academic program they were affiliated with, while others listed more than one program. Sixty-seven academic connections were indicated: history (39 percent); social science or social studies (15 percent); genealogy (12 percent); continuing education, with no specific field listed (12 percent); social history (6 percent); English (4 percent); and American Studies, career education, biology, culture and history, history-geography, multi-cultural education, anthropology, and ethnic preservation (1 percent each).

In contacting the Departments of Education for each state, we were referred most often to the social studies advisor. Family heritage or history is not taught as a separate course, but is taught where appropriate in the social studies programs in the local school districts.

The official journal of the National Council of Social Studies states, "teachers need constantly to look for relationships between their subject matter and family-oriented concerns. For example, the topic of reconstruction following the Civil War can be viewed by analyzing the strains it imposed upon families in certain geographic regions. The topic of urbanization can be explained by illustrating new services that cities provided to families. Studying clothes of their grandparents can give students insights into the social values of another time period.... Students can learn a great deal about the depression era by viewing the records of those families who survived the period...the possibilities are endless."[12]

2. Non-Academic Programs

The sponsors of other activities can be categorized as: societies (genealogical, historical, etc.) (13 percent); publications only (not a sponsor, but listed separately here since this is not really an activity, although some of the publications were family newsletters) (7 percent); families (5 percent); individuals (5 percent); libraries (4 percent); government agencies (Library of Congress American Folklife Center, Smithsonian Institute Folklife Program, etc.) (4 percent); and miscellaneous (extension service--4-H club, and church Sunday School class) (2 percent).

3. Financial Sources

Projects were found to be funded by individuals, families, local libraries, historical or genealogical societies, community corporations, state corporations, departments of education (state), local districts of education, departments of community affairs (state), departments of humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institute, etc. In addition some co-sponsors were mentioned, such as the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Energy.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated more than one source for funding. The most common combinations

were tuition and institutional funds, tuition and donations, and donations and government or foundation grants. One questionnaire indicated tuition cost of $5, which would really appear to be a workshop fee.

One excellent reference which can help groups find funding for their projects is an information leaflet published by the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, titled, "Where to Turn for Help in Folklore and Folklife." (See appendix B.)

Another source of information on funding is the Foundation Center, a national service organization that provides information on funding through foundations. This organization publishes aids and distributes them to libraries across the country. Their publications list 22,000 active U.S. foundations, with sample listings and information that will allow you to examine the grants available and determine the one most likely to accept your own idea.[11]

We wondered about one questionnaire that indicated the project of compiling guides to cemeteries was financed by membership dues. (A closer reading of the fine print indicated membership dues of a family organization and not the cemetery occupants.)

CONTENT AND AREAS OF EMPHASIS

The subject matter most common to the family history activities is the pedigree chart, closely followed by the family group records and family traditions. The breakdown is as follows:

Pedigree chart	50
Traditions	47
Ethnic backgrounds	36
Religious heritage	35
Folklore	28
Literature	23
Family group record	47
Community setting	40
Photographs	36
Occupations	32
Heirlooms and other	26

(Some responses did not break down into content.)

Again, the many "aliases" of family history are seen in the category other. Since this is of special interest to teachers and administrators of family history projects, we think they are all worth listing:

Writing family biographies
Genetics and heredity
Contact or communication with others
Documentation
Original family documents
History
Use of tape recorders
Use of local historical society
Family structure
Demography
Language
Location
Sources
Family rites (weddings, christenings)
Attitudes
Document analysis
Social and political events affecting the family
Artistic talents and skills
Family and local history
National setting
Work education
Oral history
Your place in the community
Getting to know their ancestors
Use of maps
Geography
Camera, etc.
Recording data
Family economy
History
Indexing
Historical method
Recreation
Education
Oral history collection
Migration patterns
Evaluating genealogical evidence
Food ways
Historical context
Career education

How "they" felt about things
Perspective—how our ancestors perceived things
Journals
Personal histories
Unusual happenings such as floods, fires, etc.
Life experiences
Modern history
Local history
Labor movements in local area
Politics
Photographs
Values and lifestyles
Letters
Crafts
Dances
Communications
Understanding the world to which they belonged
Diaries
Local resources
Public events
Culture
Different cultures
State history
Ethnic
Folklore
Economic factors
Diaries
Women's work and family life
Traditional history
Foods
Cross-cultural aspects
Cultural differences

TEXTS AND RESOURCE MATERIAL

Our survey showed that most instructors prepare their own outlines and reference material with use of some supplementary reference books. There is no particular reference book or text that stands out in the overall survey of activity. We feel that a concerted effort to compile a bibliography of all areas dealing with family heritage--family history (including what we have termed the "aliases") would be very helpful. The lecture papers given at this conference, which will be available in printed form, will go a long way toward filling this need.

PARTICIPANTS

The number of participants in each activity varied considerably, ranging from one individual for a family history project to over 7,000 in the Indiana TRACE project. Most activities had between 8 and 25 participants. A few numbered between 40 to 50 and several school programs had 180 to 325 participants.

One of the interesting discoveries of the survey was that the activities covered all ages and were not slanted toward any age group. The range of ages reported was from 1 year to 100 years old, with descriptions such as "senior citizens and young people" in the same class description. In fact, one of the very positive aspects reported was the increased communication between age groups. One teacher also indicated that it was great therapy for problem children to have them interview prominent citizens in the community.

The backgrounds of the participants varied just as much as their ages. The most common response to the question about the participants' background was that the project or activity accepted participants from all walks of life. The general classifications mentioned, in order of frequency, were: housewives, white collar or professional men, students, teachers, retired folk, mixed ethnic and religious groups, upper or middle class people, blue collar workers, rural or farm community people, groups of specific descent (Lebanese, Syrian, Daughters of the American Revolution, etc.), and low income children.

Some backgrounds were mentioned specifically and we list them as they were reported to provide an indication of their divergence: artist, greenhouse manager, bookkeeper, architectural draftsman, genealogical researcher, registered nurse, librarian, district court clerk, computer analyst, retired logger, bar tender, business executive, mountain area youth, and persons sharing common ancestry. One survey response indicated that

past education varied from elementary school drop outs to people with advanced degrees.

The greatest percentage of responses indicated there were no restrictions on who could participate in the activities. However, some indicated that there were restrictions such as: (1) being a student in the school where the program was provided; (2) over eighteen unless granted special permission; (3) by invitation only; (4) by application; (5) must be a resident of the state; (6) must be residents of the county; (7) "money if class taken for credit"; and (8) high school graduates or equivalent.

INSTRUCTORS

Fifty-one of the questionnaires listed information on the education of the instructor. Of these, 29 percent had a bachelor's degree, 35 percent a master's degree, and 16 percent a Ph.D., while 20 percent had no degree at all.

The items listed under "special qualifications for instructors" first appeared to be a list of personal achievements of the respondents. For example, some of the responses were:

> "Forty to fifty years in genealogical research"
>
> "My mother went to Iowa in a covered wagon"
>
> "Director of genealogical programs for a university"
>
> "Extensive, lifelong experience with French language and culture"
>
> "Knowledge of genealogy and how to use resources" and so forth.

However, some general categories of qualifications for successful instructors in family heritage or history can be gleaned from the responses. There seems to be four main qualifications: (1) Genealogical research experience and training, (2) teaching experience, (3) professional training in aspects of writing or literature, and (4) an interest in and love for people. The kinds of professional training mentioned were: MLS (master in library science), librarian, published author, journalist, and backgrounds in literature, languages, linguistics, social work, or psychology.

WHO REPORTED

The survey questionnaire asked "describe yourself with respect to the activity." Some listed more than one and others did not list, but the following was reported: 9 were students, 34 were teachers, and 26 were administrators.

GREATEST PROBLEMS

Of those responding to the free response question of "greatest problems," 26 percent indicated that time was their greatest problem--time to work on their projects, time to schedule meetings, time spent in class, etc. Twenty-three percent indicated problems with the logistics of their activity--size of the group, diversity of backgrounds, variety of genealogical experience, keeping the group together, etc. The next most frequently listed problem was relative to locating and obtaining the needed library sources (13 percent). Other problems that were indicated in order are:

- 26% Time
- 23% Logistics
- 13% Library sources
- 9% Increasing membership
- 9% Funding or sponsorship
- 6% Work and storage space
- 6% Motivating participants
- 4% Publishing
- 2% Self esteem of participants
- 1% The weather

We suppose it was inevitable that someone would mention the weather. The weatherman gets blamed for so many things, why

not the success of a project in family history?

GREATEST REWARDS

As would be expected, many comments were received in the section on "greatest rewards." Unsatisfied participants would not be expected to respond voluntarily to a questionnaire. However, the responses in this area indicated significant benefits in five general areas: (1) personal growth and satisfaction, (2) family communication and togetherness, (3) social rewards, (4) teacher satisfaction and rewards, and (5) genealogical and historical research benefits.

1. Personal Growth and Satisfaction

Of course some general comments were made like, "it is all a reward," or "personal satisfaction," or "satisfied my curiosity." But other comments were more significant, such as:

— "Seeing people develop positive attitudes about the local...heritage and...their participation in it."

— "Watching growth in individuals."

— I feel I am helping these students to realize the significance of the individual—his time in history, his contribucion to a family heritage, and the importance of preserving his family history."

— "Children changed attitude for better living habits. Gained appreciation and insight."

— "Relationship that developed between interviewer and interviewee—therapy for problem children by sending them out to interview prominent citizens in the community."

2. Family Communication and Togetherness

Perhaps the most significant rewards of family history or heritage activities come in the area of family communication and togetherness. One respondent said, "Parents come to me exclaiming, 'For the first time we have been sitting down as a family and talking together!'" Another said, "Found out specific facts from grandfather never before known because of stimulation from class." (The grandfather died about six weeks later and the respondent wondered what he would have lost if he had not been motivated by the class to talk to him?) Other comments were not as specific but demonstrate the importance of this aspect of family history projects:

— "Discovering how large our family really is."

— "Students went home and talked—really talked to their own relatives, some of them for the first time."

— "Students have searched for the story of the day-to-day life of the past in their own backyards and have found that history can be close to home as well as far away."

— "Communication channels open between generations."

— "Family's involvement and interest in working with child; may become ongoing family project."

3. Social Rewards

As was mentioned in the above section, some projects opened the channels of communication between generations. Other social rewards or benefits were indicated, such as, "gained new friends corresponding by mail;" "everyone benefits from others' experience;" "personal satisfaction and correspondence around the world with members and friends." One respondent indicated that participants gained an "increased understanding of minority groups." Another said that his greatest reward was in "seeing the joy students get from getting to know their ancestors as people." Another mentioned increased cultural awareness as a reward.

One important thought presented was, "We made history come alive—and got the students out of the classroom and into the community to interview their grandparents and others who knew about these things." Another comment related to this one was, "Older persons review their past and come to see that their lives have been important—increases the life satisfaction of participants."

4. **Teacher Satisfaction and Rewards**

In many ways, it is difficult to separate teacher satisfaction from the other categories, but the following comments appear to come under this topic:

— "Class learns to help each other, appreciate background differences in heritage."

— "Witness progress on part of participants and also obtaining copies of finished family history."

— "Seeing them able to help themselves in a creditable manner."

— "Helping others begin research."

— "Students' feeling of self-worth and pride in family history and origins."

— "Seeing the joyful expressions on students faces when they find a long lost relative."

— "Watching the kids come up with interesting facts."

— "Satisfied customers (teacher)."

— "Students finding ancestors through the knowledge gained in class."

— "Sharing was super!"

— "See the excitement and involvement of class members."

— "Super interest by students and their families. No one ever says, 'Why do we have to do this?"

— "Producing guides for teachers to use in classroom."

5. **Genealogical and Historical Research Benefits**

Aside from the obvious enthusiasm generated for research, the following benefits were indicated:

— "Finally, one central place for research on Smith genealogy."

— "Students continuing the research and having parents become involved."

— "A group who understand the value of preserving and printing ancient records."

— "Working with professionals from several disciplines to construct a broad framework of knowledge; far-ranging field experiences have been possible; the sum of the parts has become greater than any of us would have anticipated at the start."

— "Helping people find answers to research questions they had always wondered about."

— "Helping others begin correctly and orienting them to sources available for research."

— "Students are able to apply scientific research techniques to their family history problems."

A SAMPLING OF ACTIVITIES

Thus far we have discussed the results of the survey in general. We have selected twelve activities from the many reported to discuss in detail:

1. **"Foxfire" - Georgia**

One of the better known projects is the one undertaken by Eliot Wigginton and his

English and journalism students in Rabun Gap-Nacoochee school in Georgia's Appalachian country. Having a group of students that were bored with the typical structured English class, Mr. Wigginton was at the point of resigning when he decided to try a unique approach to English teaching. "The next day I walked into class and said, 'How would you like to throw away the text and start a magazine?' and that's how Foxfire began.

"From the beginning, the idea was to involve everyone (it hasn't always worked, but we try). We decided to print one issue put together by all of us as a class and during class time.... The contents? There were lots of possibilities. Many older people in this area, for example, still plant today by the signs of the zodiac and the stages of the moon... I didn't know what it meant ...my kids didn't really know what it was either, and soon they were as curious as I was. Why not find out and turn the information into an article? So they went home and talked—really talked—to their own relatives, some of them for the first time."

The students had to raise the money for the publication, "and so they hit the streets after school. Any donor, no matter how small his gift, would be listed in the issue, and he would receive a free copy signed by all the kids. They collected $450. The local printer said that was enough to print 600 copies photo-offset. So we printed 600 copies, sold out in a week, and printed 600 more."

The result was the gathering of information and the publication of the Foxfire series, which includes superstitions, old home remedies, weather signs, directions for planting by the signs, and other folklore and family stories. "Is the subject, English, ignored in the process? Hardly. In fact, the opposite is true, English...is communication—reaching out and touching people with words, sounds, and visual images..."[13]

2. "Shadows of the Past" - North Carolina

A similar activity, except on a much smaller scale is happening in many other places. For example, the home town weekly newspaper "The Nashville Graphic" (Nashville, North Carolina) carried an article and photo in July 1980 about the seventh grade at Rocky Mount Academy "who last semester compiled a booklet on the history and folklore of Nash County called 'Shadows of the Past.'

"From a description of ironing 'in the old days,' to the history of Red Oak School, to the story of Nash County's gold mine: It's all contained in 'Shadows of the Past.' Or a recipe for lye soap, or how to make 12 day cucumber pickles, or how to kill a hog. That, too, can be found in the pages of this mimeographed booklet on the history and folklore of Nash and Edgecombe counties, compiled by seventh grade students as a class project.

"'We wanted to bring history alive... (and) get the students out of the classroom and into the community to interview their grandparents and others who knew about these things,' stated Linda Fisher, teacher of N.C. history at the school. Ms. Fisher called the project a great success. 'The students have searched for the story of the day to day life of the past in their own backyards and have found that history can be close at home as well as far away.'"[14]

3. PET - Delaware

A little different approach has been taken in project PET (Preserving Ethnic Traditions). Fifty high school students and twelve teacher coordinators from seven Delaware school districts were involved in a federally funded grant awarded by the U.S. Office of Education under the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program. "The students were involved in researching historical context, values, customs, traditions and artifacts of

predominant ethnic groups within their local community. The research was accomplished through student-taped interviews, photography, and by observing and studying the life styles of members of the ethnic community."

A one-week workshop was held at the beginning of the project to prepare students and teachers to "go out in the community and accomplish the goals set forth in the project. In essence the project was a learning-by-doing experience." The results were published and "it is expected that other school districts will utilize this publication as a resource for instruction in the social studies, arts and humanities and other areas that deal with cultural understanding. It is also suggested that school districts duplicate this project to deal with the customs and contributions of other ethnic groups that have not been treated in this publication."[15]

4. **Family History Night - California**

Another group of projects are presented by the Family History Project of Balboa Junior High School in Ventura, California. Its purpose is described as being, "to introduce the study of the family as a part of U.S. History in connection with the Immigration period of national history." This project began in 1974 and is part of the academic program. It involves 350 students, ages thirteen to fourteen. The class text is America and It's People and Values by Wood, Babriel, Biller, 1975.

Mrs. Margaret Gosfield, teacher, describes it as "a project which both teachers and administrators wish to continue at our school on a yearly basis." The project has four parts and lasts from about December 1 to January 15 (holiday time when families are together). The first part is a genealogical tracing of the students' ancestors as far back as possible. Since the students are studying the immigration period in class, a goal is to trace at least one line back to the forebearer who migrated to this country. However, there is no penalty if this cannot be achieved.

The second part is an interview by the student with the oldest available living relatives, most often one or more grandparents. They are encouraged to tape these but are free to decide whether to share them with the class.

The third part is a paper by each student on one ancestral line or person, organized to cover a number of specified topics. One requirement is that the student describe the significant events in American history that were occurring during the lifetime(s) of their ancestor(s). This leads the student to identify personally with the course and events of American history.

The final phase is Family History Night, during which students set up their displays in an exhibit to which families and friends are invited. The displays consist primarily of family heirlooms, photographs, and other treasures. Each student sits next to his or her display to explain and answer questions for the visitors.

The entire project has met with tremendous enthusiasm from students, parents, and administration. A reporter from the local newspaper comes out on Family History Night and takes photographs of many of the displays. The students are excited about getting their pictures in the paper. Parents come with comments like "for the first time we have been sitting down as a family and talking together. Grandparents are delighted that their grandchildren are taking an interest in their backgrounds...."[16]

5. **Term Project - Nova Scotia, Canada**

A description of a project from a history teacher in Nova Scotia, Canada, shows the similarities in what is going on all over North America. "For several years I have given as a term project, an optional topic, a family history or tree. The students have about a month to put it

together. I point them in all cases to their parents and older family members. In some cases the students find themselves writing to relatives for the first time. If their roots are in Nova Scotia then I suggest a trip to the Public Archives. If they have roots in the areas served by the school then I can sometimes help by directing them to work done on local history or to some cemetery or local person with knowledge.

"Some of the results have been quite detailed if the student has had luck at the archives. Others have been more of a personal biography of the student and perhaps his father and mother and grandparents. In these I learn of how World War II and the Depression of the 30s influenced their family. Very often students put together a photo file of parents and grandparents, etc. Certainly the project puts the student in touch with his own personal past. It also puts him in touch with his own family. Opens up new lines of communication. They take great pride in their work."[17]

6. TRACE—Indiana

Another program with some similarities and yet unique in its approach is the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation sponsored project known as TRACE (Tracing and Researching Ancestry to Cultivate Esteem), now in its third year. TRACE began with seventy-five hundred students in grades 6, 7, and 8 (ages twelve, thirteen, and fourteen) and has added 2,000 additional students each year plus those continuing with the project. It is held after school. This was financed by a Title IV-C innovative federal ESEA grant through state jurisdiction. Special workbooks and aids have been prepared and published. The emphasis of the course is for each student to compile a personal history with interaction in the histories of his parents and grandparents.

Project TRACE offers a new approach for students to learn more about themselves and their heritage. Family ties can be strengthened, research skills broadened, creativity developed, and important basic educational skills reinforced. Students utilize community resources with which they may otherwise not come in contact. Furthermore, genealogical research can serve to build a greater and more personal interest in history. Giving students the opportunity to trace their heritage provides them with a truly unique and enriching educational experience.

7. "History Fair" - Illinois

Yet a different approach is seen in the Chicago Metro History Fair. Similar to a science fair, individual students or small groups of students can enter projects on their own family history or community history. Sponsored by several community organizations, this fair has been described as "the largest undertaking in the history of the Illinois Humanities Council" and "the nation's first project encouraging metropolitan high school students to seek their own family and community roots." The project is funded basically by local sources including the Illinois Humanities Council, the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, and other area small foundations and corporations in connection with the Cook and DuPage county schools.

Arthur Anderson, one of the directors of the fair, states that the two counties have a potential of 275 high schools. Last year, the second year for the fair, 135 high schools were involved, with 4,000 students participating. About one-fourth of the projects dealt with family history. The fair includes papers, exhibits, and performances by the students. The object is to get the student out of the classroom and into action.

Preparation for the fair includes teacher workshops in the fall where family, community, and local history are taught. In 1980 these workshops involved about 500 students. Next, the leaders of the fair visit the classrooms to provide

assistance. "Cluster Meetings" are also held as needed to provide further guidance and help. The third phase is the academic competition. In some cases the students send in their entries, some schools have local fairs, some teachers do the judging, etc. About 350 finalists end up at the fair in May, where each one is honored.

The winners are sent to the national competition of the State History Day program. But that is the only involvement the Chicago Metro History Fair has with the other program. Success of the Fair is shown in the fact that there was an 82 percent increase in entries between the first year (1979) and the second one in 1980.[19]

8. **Summer Workshop - Illinois**

Much smaller programs such as the workshops for adults in Shelbyville, Illinois help "to stimulate interest in heritage and community. Mrs. Helen Cox Tregillis, the teacher, reports that she has thirteen adults in one summer workshop. (As high school instructor, she also teaches genealogy in her secondary English classes to more than 120 students yearly.) The greatest rewards are "communication channels open between generations."[20]

9. **"Kin and Community" - Indiana**

The "Kin and Community" classes offered by the Anderson Public Library in Indiana "to stress the importance and role of the family in the community" is another example. These two-hour sessions are held weekly for eight weeks. The average number of students is forty, ages seventeen to eighty, and the typical background is factory worker. Projects include "each individual 'traces' his history. A family history is then written." The greatest problem is time, and the greatest rewards are "witnessing progress on part of participants and also obtaining copy of finished family history" (for the library).[21]

10. **Ethnic Heritage Program - Illinois**

Another library-sponsored program is on a larger scale. "An ethnic heritage program focusing on 10 of Chicago's nationality groups began Feb 1980 at the Chicago Public Library. Funded by a $160,300 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the program features films, discussions, lectures, and exhibits on aspects of Black, Chinese, German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Mexican, Polish, and Puerto Rican culture. The program encourages heavy participation by senior citizens and young people who may wish to learn more about the customs and traditions of their parents and grandparents. Traveling exhibits highlight the program's cross-cultural aspects, and related bibliographies have been published in some 40 languages."[22]

11. **Oral History - Missouri**

Oral History programs have also been developed by ethnic groups such as the program sponsored by the Lebanese/Syrian Community in St. Louis. With the purpose "to preserve the history of the community," this program is financed by a government grant plus donations. It includes forty to fifty people ages thirty to eighty, who are first and second generation immigrants. The results of their study are to be published. The teacher-administrator involved is a member of this community.[23]

12. **Community Heritage - Missouri**

In Cadet, Missouri, the Old Mines Area Historical Society sponsors a psychosocial study of Missouri French culture and language involving about twenty to thirty students at any one time, ages ten to eighty, with the typical background of rural middle and lower middle class. It is designed "to help the local community appreciate and esteem our heritage more, and to provide the vehicle for documenting heritage and preserving it."[24] The greatest problems are listed as

funding and keeping the momentum up. The greatest rewards are listed as seeing people develop positive attitudes about the local French heritage and their participation in it.

CONCLUSION

We feel that we have only touched the "tip of the iceberg" in uncovering the activities in family history or family heritage at the grass roots level in the United States and Canada. Much more could and should be done to discover this data and share it with others who may be interested in starting or enriching their own activities. We feel that if in some small way we have contributed to the sharing of ideas in the field of family history and its many "aliases" our purposes have been met.

There is a trend for increased activity in this field at all levels, and the trend is not limited to any particular age or social group—religious or ethnic. To the contrary, it appears that each ethnic and religious group is anxious to preserve its heritage, is proud of its origins, and is becoming part of our emerging national heritage. In seeking to identify, appreciate, and preserve the various ethnic heritages, the purpose is not to separate them from each other, but to appreciate the contribution that each has made to our national heritage.

The yearning to establish one's heritage does not go in only one direction; a classic example of ancestors reaching forward in time is the entry of a Welch immigrant, "I am laboring under some disadvantage to keep my journal in the English language being a Welchman, but I will do the best I can in the English language foreseeing that my posterity will read and write the English language better than the Welch language because of their being brought up among English brethren mostly."[25]

What is there that does not relate back to the family and the individual? There is no individual that is not associated with some family. For we could not come into this life without a father and a mother. The father and mother may not be known but they existed and the challenge to us all is to find our roots and to help our families understand these noble ancestors intimately.

The foundation of attitudes toward community, state and the nation in which we live and the roles assumed by the citizenry are established in the home and family. "More of our heritage—the way we really feel about things—is passed from one generation to another as it is absorbed by the growing child in the home than in any other way."[26] A recent Gallup poll indicated that eight out of every ten people consider their own family the most important thing to them.[27]

From a religious standpoint, the history of religion is a family history. In fact, the writings of all civilizations are indeed family histories. But the main point of our study and perhaps the purpose of the entire World Conference on Records is to help families preserve their own heritage. The key is to understand that whatever is not written down is soon forgotten. This thought was amply expressed in an editorial in the Deseret News, July 16, 1862: (vol. 12:12).

> "If a man keeps no diary, the path crumbles away behind him as his feet leave it; and days gone by are but little more than a blank, broken by a few distorted shadows.... There must be a richness about the life of a person who keeps a diary, unknown to other men. And a million more little links and ties must bind him to the members of his family circle, and to all among whom he lives. Life to him, looking back, is not a bare line, stringing together his personal identity; it is surrounded intertwined, entangled with thousands and thousands of slight incidents, which give it beauty, kindliness, reality."

NOTES

[1]A survey of 112 selected U.S. libraries was made in 1973 seeking information on activity in family history or genealogy, including (1) size of genealogical collection, (2) average number of persons per week seeking family history or genealogy, (3) number of written requests for assistance in genealogy or family- history tracing, (4) size of genealogy-family history reference staff, (5) whether most patrons were amateurs or professionally trained researchers, (6) greatest need in the field of family history and genealogy.

Eighty responses were received from 43 states and the District of Columbia. A follow-up survey of all libraries who responded with actual figures in 1973 was made in 1977.

Both surveys were conducted by Elizabeth L. Nichols. The results are unpublished.

[2]Figures based on actual counts during one month each year.

[3]A 1977 survey form. See note 1.

[4]Conversation with Philip McMullin of the Institute of Family Research in 1977.

[5]Elizabeth L. Nichols, Help Is Available, no 2 in the series Simplified Step-by-Step Instruction Books for the Beginner in Genealogy 2nd edition. (Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, 1980, p. 171.

[6]Information leaflets from the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, Local History Program, received 1978.

[7]Allan Lichtman, Your Family History (Random House, 1978.)

[8]Dean L. May, "Uses of Historical Demography in the Reconstitution of Family History," Genealogical Journal 8 (Mar. 1979): 3-8.

[9]John Sorenson, "Interpreting and Enriching Family History through an Understanding of Cultural Differences," World Conference on Records lecture series no. 346, 1980.

[10]Leaflets and periodicals consulted but not quoted from:

American Folklife Center: Projects and Activities. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, February 1980).

American Folklife Center. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, American Folklife Center (a pamphlet).

Guide to Programs, 1979. (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts (a pamphlet).

Library of Congress Information Bulletin. (Washington D.C., July 1979, Volume 38, no. 30).

The Journal of Family History (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The National Council on

Family Relations). Studies in Family, Kinship and Demography. A scholarly journal. Not recommended for the average family historian.

Linking the Family of Man. 1979 Annual Report for Who Am I, a non-profit organization with a computer-based pedigree archive. (Salt Lake City, Utah).

"Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services. Newsletter." March 28, 1978. (Franco-American genealogy workships for library personnel and persons interested in family research — held in six towns, sponsored by Maine State Library).

National Trust for Historic Preservation (Washirgton, D.C., a pamphlet, 1979).

National Endowment for the Humanities and American Social History (Washington, D.C., a pamphlet).

"Newberry Summer Institute in Quantitative History" (Chicago, Illinois: Newberry Library, Family and Community History Center).

New England Historic Genealogical Society (Boston, Massachusetts, a pamphlet).

Folklife Program, Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Telephone conversation with Barbara Strickland, 20 June 1980. (Printed Material not yet received.)

What Is Anthropology? (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, a pamphlet, 1979).

Where to Turn for Help in Folklore and Folklife (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress American Folklife Center, a pamphet, November 1979).

"Youth Projects in History," History News, (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, April 1980).

"Center for Historical Population Studies Complements LDS Genealogical Society," in the Genealogy Digest, Fall 1978.

"Senior Citizens, Want to Write Your Autobiography?" The News Leader (newspaper, Homestead, Florida).

"Quest for Identity: Americans Go on A Genealogy Kick" in U.S. News and World Report, 29 July 1974, pp. 41-42.

Ronald Yates, Chicago Tribune, April 1974. Genealogy has grown within the last ten years to the third largest hobby, according to a national survey, being topped only by coin and stamp collecting.

In California, the Great Western Savings with its 98 branches, and the Glendale Federal Savings with its 68 branches, offered a specially published pamphlet, displays, and lectures on genealogy along with special drawings to meet the desires of their customers for help in tracing their family roots in 1977.

In Boston, area banks hired a genealogist to come and answer questions and provide assistance to their customers in tracing their roots. (Personal conversa-

tion with Robert Tarte of Massachusetts in 1977.)

Goals and Guidelines: Oral History Association (Denton, Texas: North Texas State University, a pamphlet).

[11]The Foundation Center: Publication and Services. (NY: The Foundation Center, a pamphlet).

[12]"The American Family and Social Education," "Social Education: Official Journal of the National Council for Social Studies, vol. 41 no. 6 (October 1977).

[13]Eliot Wigginton, Foxfire (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972). All quotes taken from the introduction.

[14]"RM Students Write Booklet on Area History, Folklore," Nashville Graphic (Nashville, North Carolina newspaper) June 1980.

[15]Project PET: Preserving Ethnic Traditions through Delaware Student Research, 1978. (Dover, Delaware: Delaware State Department of Public Instruction).

[16]"Study of Roots Helps Pride in Heritage Grow," Ventral Star Free Press (California newspaper), 17 January 1980, and letter from Mrs. Margaret Fosfield.

[17]Personal letter from Robert P. Harvey of Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, Canada, dated 6 July 1980.

[18]Looking Back . . . Tracing My Heritage. Student Workbook. Project TRACE: Tracing and Researching Ancestry to Cultivate Esteem. Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Title IV-C Public Law 93-380. Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Evansville, Indiana. Also "Trace Gazette" no. 1, vol. 1, February 1980 (a newsletter). And a telephone conversation with Carolyn Hoos, project directory, July 1980.

[19]Metro History Fair News vol. 1, nos. 1 & 2 (October 1978) and vol. 2, no. 1, (October 1979) by the (Chicago: Chicago Metro History Fair). Also a telephone conversation with Arthur Anderson, one of the directors of the Fair, July 1980.

[20]Survey questionnaire.

[21]Survey questionnaire.

[22]American Libraries, March 1980 issue, page 177.

[23]Survey questionnaire.

[24]Survey questionnaire.

[25]Original in possession of Arlene Eakle, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[26]Elizabeth L. Nichols, "Family History," Genealogical Helper, May-June 1979. (Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, pp. 8-14, 111-114.)

[27]Gallup Poll - Quoted in "Spoken Word" by Spencer Kinard, June 22, 1980.